

## £12m boost for Wales' Great Outdoors

Lesley Griffiths has announced Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons and the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path National Park Authorities will receive grant funding totalling £9.5m for 2017/18.

Meanwhile, Wales' five [Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) have today been awarded £275,000 to help them to continue to deliver the Sustainable Development Fund. Under this fund, AONBs will each receive £55,000 to establish projects which support ways of living and working in a more sustainable way, integrating natural beauty, wildlife, landscape, land use and community.

Earlier this year the Cabinet Secretary confirmed an extra £2.5m, in addition to their core funding, to support projects identified by Wales' National Park Authorities and AONBs. These include initiatives to promote outdoor recreation and improve mountain safety.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“We all know Wales has some of the most stunning and inspiring natural landmarks anywhere in the world. Our breathtaking National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have long been magnets for visitors and locals alike.

“Earlier this year, I was able to provide over £2.5m of additional funding to support projects identified by Wales' National Park Authorities and AONBs. I look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition over the coming months.

“I am pleased today to further confirm funding of nearly £10m which will enable our National Park Authorities and AONBs to continue to protect and improve these valuable landscapes for future generations.”

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## UEFA gives platform to boost tourism promotion in challenging global market

Tourism figures published today show a positive picture of tourism performance in a challenging global market place.

The Great Britain Day Visitor Survey shows that in the 12 months ending April 2017, there were 103.2 million tourism day visits to Wales, with an

associated spend of £4,265 million. The number of visits has increased 20.4% compared to the 12 months ending April 2016, while the amount spent has increased 30.2%.

However, the overnight GB survey for the 12 months ending January 2017 shows that the number of visits has decreased 11.6% compared to the 12 months ending January 2016. The number of visits to GB as a whole has decreased by 3.9% over the same period.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“It makes me very, very proud to see what was achieved in Cardiff this weekend. There will be millions of people across the globe who will have sat up and taken notice of Wales as a place to visit, work and do business. We have extensive experience in capitalising on major events which have been held in Wales and we will now make the most of this platform – It’s an opportunity I’m looking forward to grasping with both hands. I’m delighted that we were able to welcome legendary footballers from around the world to Wales during our Year of Legends.

“Tourism performance remains positive in such a challenging market. In 2016 the overall picture for Wales – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – shows a substantial increase in overall tourism volumes compared with 2015. The total of visits across all three categories was 15% up during 2016 – which builds on the previous successful years.

I’m delighted that the day visit figures which include the Easter break continue to see an increase this year. We will continue with our campaign work to ensure that we make the most of the opportunities to attract overseas visitors and those looking to holiday at home due to the weak pound.

“Our overseas visitors also increased last year and we’ll make the most of our chance to sell Wales to the world as the place where fans had a remarkable experience during the Champions League Final and which saw Gareth Bale lifting the trophy in his home city.”

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## **Traditional Welsh Perry & Cider toast protected status success**

They join other iconic Welsh products, such as Welsh Laverbread, Welsh Lamb and Halen Môn/Anglesey Sea Salt, in being recognised for their distinct quality and awarded protection against imitation and misuse.

Traditional Welsh Perry and Traditional Welsh Cider are protected by the European Protected Geographical Indication status (PGI), which will provide consumers with the confidence they are drinking the genuine Welsh product.

In total, 14 Welsh products have now been awarded protected status. Traditional Welsh Perry and Traditional Welsh Cider have now received the honour of being the first Welsh drinks to attain the PGI status.

The Welsh Government has supported the Welsh Perry and Cider Society during the complicated and extensive application process.

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“I am delighted Traditional Welsh Perry and Traditional Welsh Cider are the latest of our food and drink products to be awarded protected status.

“This is further evidence of the success of the Welsh food and drink sector and the effectiveness of our strategy to support it. We are forging a reputation for developing unique, high quality products and the industry is already more than half way towards reaching our target of 30% growth from 2014 to 2020.

“The recognition from the European Commission is important as it demonstrates the quality of Wales’ produce as we strive to reach new markets to grow the industry and prepare for a future outside of the EU.”

Traditional Welsh Perry and Traditional Welsh Cider are re-emerging products that were largely farm-produced drinks using perry pears and cider apples grown in nearby orchards and made for local consumption. The revival of these drinks has been based on artisan producers rediscovering and restoring ancient orchards and planting new orchards.

Sally Perks Chairman of the WPCS said:

“The Welsh Perry and Cider Society are thrilled with this announcement and the recognition of Traditional Welsh Cider and Traditional Welsh Perry as unique products. It provides a huge boost to Welsh cider makers in getting their products recognised throughout the UK and abroad.”

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# Tourism experiences further growth in 2016

Last year was the first of Wales' themed years and it proved to be great success – Visit Wales' marketing activity for 2016 generated an additional £370 million for the Welsh economy – which is an 18% increase on 2015. This is based on those definitely influenced by Visit Wales marketing before taking a trip to Wales. The Economy Secretary recently announced the continuation of the themed years with a new 'Year of Discovery' in 2019 which will build on the three themes of adventure, culture and great outdoors and follow the 2018 Year of the Sea.

In the context of the 2017 Year of Legends it is great to see that Cadw sites in Wales benefited from the increase in visitors in 2016, welcoming 1.4m visitors to its staffed sites– an 8% increase on the previous year and the heritage organisation's best year on record. There were large increases in visitor numbers at its top historic attractions, including Caernarfon, Caerphilly and Chepstow Castles. Caernarfon saw an increase of nearly 60% in visitors – many of which, had travelled to see the site's iconic Weeping Window exhibition. The arrival of a giant Welsh Dragon, which toured Cadw sites as part of its innovative "Historic Adventures" marketing campaign, also played a crucial role in attracting a new generation of visitors to sites. Following last year's success and having now gained widespread fame as Wales' resident Dragon – for the Year of Legends – Dewi the Dragon has been joined by Dwynwen and over the weekend they welcomed two baby dragons to Caerphilly Castle.

The Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"The tourism Industry in Wales is in fantastic shape and I'm delighted that the Cadw sites attracted so many additional visitors last year. This shows that innovative ideas like the Cadw Dragon help to spark a renewed interest in our heritage which not only has a positive impact on our historic environment but also on Wales's wider economy. These iconic sites are continuing to inspire the people of Wales and bringing our past to life during our Year of Legends.

"Last year, we also saw record breaking spend from overseas visitors and crossed the million visitors for the first time in 8 years, which is excellent news. We fully recognise how competitive the market is and the challenges facing the industry. Our future vision – especially in light of the EU Referendum result – is to do more again to build on this sense of confidence and to internationalise our reputation and approach. We're making the most of every opportunity presented by the UEFA Champions League Final to raise awareness of Wales as a holiday destination in our key markets."

The Economy Secretary, continued:

“Although most of our performance indicators look good and feedback from the industry is positive, overnight GB figures showed a fall in 2016 compared with the record year of 2015, as did figures for all overnight trips to GB. However, the overall picture for Wales – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – shows a substantial increase in overall tourism volumes compared with 2015 . The total of visits across all three categories was 15% up during 2016 – which builds on the previous successful years.

“Campaign work to convert early interest and opportunities arising from the weak pound will continue with the Summer campaign.”

Adverts will shortly appear on London Underground Stations with the Year of Legends TV advert featuring Luke Evans being played on the Waterloo motion screen. The TV advert will also be shown on Channel 4 in London to coincide with the Cabins in the Wild programme – as well as on Sky Regional London and Sky Adsmart Meridian.

Figures published this week on accommodation occupancy show positive trends for 2017 with Room occupancy for guesthouses/B&Bs over the 12 months ending March 2017 at 40%, 2 percentage points higher than the same period in 2016.

Over the 12 months ending March 2017, self-catering unit occupancy rose by 2 percentage points to 54%, compared with the same period in 2016.

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## [Aberystwyth to Cardiff bus service to continue until at least December](#)

The 6 month extension to the current pilot will allow the Welsh Government to better assess the needs and travel patterns of customers, taking account of the summer tourist season and beyond, before making a long term decision on the service.

Ken Skates said:

“When we introduced the TIC service a little under six months ago, we did so to facilitate direct bus travel between west Wales and Cardiff. We’ve since seen this service used by a variety of groups and individuals, from students to shoppers to holiday goers.

“At the same time, however, we have made no secret that the service is not as popular as we might have expected. This can perhaps be

explained by the introduction of a commercial service run by Stagecoach Megabus earlier this year covering largely the same route, albeit with notable exceptions.

“Given this, I think there is great merit in extending the pilot for another 6 months. This will ensure any long term decision on the future of the service is made with a full year of data, whilst allowing us to continue to talk to passenger groups, bus operators, councils and interested parties about the service they would like to see and how best to achieve it.

“I’m delighted that our Traws Cymru service continues to offer regular bus travel to communities across Wales who might otherwise be without the option of public transport. I’m pleased to announce that the T1C will continue to be part of that offering until at least December.”

T1C service stops at all stops between Aberystwyth – Aberearon – Lampeter and Carmarthen and then operates limited stops between Carmarthen and Cardiff via Cross Hands, Swansea Bus Station and Bridgend Outlet Village.